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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 6TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 24 September 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. TRAXLER (Vice-President)	(Italy)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)

- Address by Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Republic of Lebanon
- Address by Mr. Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Van Den Broek (Netherlands)

Mr. Pankin (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Mr. Dumas (France)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. ELIAS HRAOUI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Lebanese Republic.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Republic of Lebanon, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Lebanese Republic, Mr. Elias Hraoui - who represents the unified Lebanon - and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President HRAOUI (interpretation from Arabic): Lebanon comes to the United Nations this year, having overcome severe crises and devastating wars. This it has done thanks to the faithfulness of the Lebanese, their attachment to the country and their unity of will; to the support of sister Arab countries and other friendly nations; and to the United Nations, which has consistently supported Lebanon's right to sovereignty, independence and peace.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. You represent the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with which we have profound ties of friendship and fraternity. Lebanon has always appreciated and continues to appreciate the Kingdom's contribution to the process by which we are extricating ourselves from war, under the leadership of King Fahd bin Abdulaziz.

(President Hraoui)

I wish to pay tribute to your predecessor - the President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session - and to express to the Secretary-General my deep appreciation of his genuine interest in Lebanon and of the distinguished role that the United Nations, under his leadership, has played in forging international cooperation.

(President Hraoui)

While welcoming the new States that have recently joined the United Nations, I wish to affirm today that Lebanon has broken out of the vicious circle of war that was imposed upon it, has begun to regain confidence in itself and to re-emerge on the world scene and play a unique role.

Our Government's commitment to the letter and spirit of "The National Conciliation Document" has enabled our central Government, in only a few months, to re-establish the authority of the State and to remove the barriers that separated one area from another. The country has regained its unity and our citizens have rallied around the State. The militias have been dissolved and their guns have fallen silent. The State has eliminated the basic causes of the war and, therefore, of the existence of the militias that arose because of them. The State has now collected the weapons of the militias and outlawed the possession of weapons other than by legitimate authority.

The Lebanese Army and the internal security forces have been deployed in the capital and in the outlying areas. They have also been deployed in our steadfast South, side by side with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with a view to extending the authority of the State there. We owe UNIFIL a great debt for the many sacrifices it has made in the performance of its noble mission.

We have reactivated State institutions and begun the process of restructuring them in the light of our urgent needs. We have revived national political life along democratic lines and affirmed our respect for all beliefs in the context of law and the national good. We have implemented political reforms and amended the Constitution accordingly. The Constitution has become more compatible with the principles of freedom, justice and equitable power-sharing.

(President Hraoui)

The world today is moving rapidly towards cooperation and coordination among States. New blocs are emerging: Europe 1992, the Organization of American States, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Union of the Arab Maghreb, are all examples of that trend. And the Lebanese, by nature open to others and anxious to cooperate, have recently ratified a Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination with Syria on the basis of mutual respect for the independence and sovereignty of each of the two States. In this context, Lebanon must express its gratitude for the great sacrifices that President Hafiz al-Assad has made in helping us realize national reconciliation and regain the authority of the State.

These are some of the achievements which brought Lebanon from despair to hope, from anarchy to order, and from fragmentation to unity. This transformation has been due largely to the character of our people. We are a peace-loving people that aspires after development. We are inclined by nature to conciliation in the context of democratic principles and respect for fundamental freedoms.

We have reinstated the State in Lebanon and the country now enjoys security and stability. But we still have much to do to eliminate the effects of the crises that engulfed our land, including the hostage crisis.

That crisis arose because of the prevalence of anarchy and the forced neutralization of Lebanese legitimate authority in large areas of the country for many years. Lebanon was among the first to condemn this phenomenon because it is in direct contradiction with our customs and traditions and with the basic principles of law and human rights. Indeed, Lebanon itself became a hostage to that alien phenomenon and its international repercussions. The Lebanese Government is determined to cooperate with all to put an end to this

(President Hraoui)

crisis. And the Government proved its determination when recently it foiled the plans of those who stand to lose from the freeing of hostages and prisoners and the return to normalcy.

The Government of Lebanon has implemented most of the provisions of "The National Conciliation Document" on which the Lebanese agreed in Taif, with the support of the League of Arab States, the sister Arab States, the members of the Arab Tripartite Committee, friendly nations, the international community and, in particular, the permanent members of the Security Council.

But the work is not over. One of the provisions that are yet to be implemented is the provision relating to the extension of the authority of the State to South Lebanon through our own forces in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). This resolution upheld Lebanon's rights in the face of the Israeli occupation of vast parts of our South and Western Biqa'. Under resolution 425 (1978) the Security Council established UNIFIL to ensure the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from our internationally recognized borders and to ensure the return of the authority of the Lebanese State over that area.

It is natural, therefore, that we ask for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and insist on the separation of the problem of South Lebanon from the overall Middle East problem. We support all efforts to which our sister Arab States agree and are ready to facilitate all international endeavours aimed at a just, comprehensive and permanent peace in the Middle East.

We want our rights. Our people in the South suffer under the yoke of Israeli occupation and are continuously exposed to aggression, which threatens their lives, their property and their fundamental human rights. We have paid

(President Hraoui)

enough for the wars of others. Lebanon is the nation of coexistence, and peace for Lebanon means peace for all.

All peoples have a sacred right to their land and our land is particularly sacred due to the demographic composition of our people. Lebanon's pluralistic and demographic structure, which is its pride and claim to international attention, is deeply rooted in the very soil of Lebanon and does not permit of either partition or fragmentation of the north from the south or the east from the west.

The peace process that has been launched will not be complete unless Israel withdraws fully and unconditionally from my country. Lebanon shall remain committed to realizing complete independence and undiminished sovereignty.

How is it acceptable that the Organization implement Security Council resolutions on the Middle East against a State which has challenged them, and yet not implement the resolution on Lebanon, which has never been the aggressor, against Israel, which has continued to flout that resolution for 13 years and persisted in occupying with its army a part of Lebanon which is very dear to us?

(President Hraoui)

A positive response by the United Nations to Lebanon's request would constitute fulfilment of the Organization's commitments to my country and enhance the credibility of Security Council decisions, especially as the United Nations had requested Lebanon, in 1989, to pursue steadfastly the implementation of the Taif Agreement which clearly provides for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Lebanon, a founding Member of the United Nations, and a participant in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, believes in international legitimacy and is intent on working within its principles and conventions.

The dangerous situation in the Middle East continues to threaten international peace and security. The Palestinians who reside in their own land are exposed to persecution and arrest. While massive Jewish immigration to Israel heightens existing fears, Israel in every way delays the resolution of the Palestinian problem and the exercise by the Palestinians of the right to self-determination. Israel's intransigent refusal to give peace efforts the chance they deserve, despite courageous Arab openness, shows that it is wrong to assume that a permanent, just and comprehensive peace could be established on the basis of oppression and persecution.

My country, which has suffered greatly from the Arab-Israeli conflict in general, and from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in particular, has a special stake in the search for a comprehensive, stable and just settlement in the Middle East. The Lebanese model, founded on diversity, dialogue and openness, provides useful lessons for constructive coexistence in the region.

Now that security has been re-established and confidence in Lebanon has been restored, our emigrants are gradually returning home and sharing in

(President Hraoui)

reconstruction. We also look forward to the support of sister Arab States and friendly nations for our reconstruction plans. Peace cannot be fully realized apart from a developmental process aimed at guaranteeing social equity and human dignity.

The long war in Lebanon has destroyed our vital resources and adversely affected our economy and infrastructures. The State budget is under the burden of heavy debts. For the past 15 years, several major sources of our national income - such as services and tourism - have suffered heavily. In addition, regional crises, the latest of which was the Gulf War, have had detrimental effects on Lebanon.

The Lebanese Government, therefore, faces many challenges in many sectors. It is determined, however, to restore normalcy. This determination stems from our confidence in the viability of Lebanon's free enterprise system, our mainstay in our drive to rebuild the country. We also rely on the constructive role of Lebanese businessmen abroad, the cooperation of the United Nations, and of other international organizations side by side with our own efforts.

We are in the process of drawing the initial plans for the reconstruction of the whole of Lebanon beginning with the capital, Beirut, and we are also working on returning all displaced Lebanese to their homes, properties and villages. Beirut, the cultural and commercial centre of the Middle East, solicits Arab and international investments throughout Lebanon. Lebanon has received aid from some Arab States and from some organizations, but what it really needs is the creation of an international fund for the reconstruction of Lebanon with the participation in that fund of the United Nations, of international organizations and of the industrialized nations.

(President Hraoui)

If, for 15 years, the world stood by and watched Lebanon undergo one crisis after another, it is not right that the world should now stand by and merely watch Lebanon face alone the challenge of revival and reconstruction. Lebanon's determination to end the state of war and to deal with the consequences that arose therefrom testify to its ability to re-emerge and to regenerate itself. Wherever the Lebanese people have settled - be it in the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Gulf or Australia - they have contributed to development. Those very Lebanese deserve your participation in the development and reconstruction of their own country.

Moreover, the international community has never failed to provide assistance to any war-ravaged country.

Are not solidarity with such countries and participation in their development at the very basis of the founding of the United Nations and in the forefront of its objectives?

Lebanon looks forward to the emergence of a new political era on the eve of the twenty-first century, an era of cooperation in furthering the progress of humanity, of brotherhood, of respect for the rights of others and of freedom, security and prosperity. A peaceful Lebanon has a unique cultural mission in its region and in the world. Peace in Lebanon is also in the interest of its sister Arab States and of world peace.

Lebanon's commitment to freedom, peace and development is such that it will never give up the struggle for their realization.

To attain a prosperous future for the region, we need to cooperate in the context of a new political order whose features are gradually taking shape as a consequence of brave Arab decisions. The new political order will be founded on the qualities of understanding, pluralism and tolerance in our

(President Hraoui)

culture, and on the realization by all concerned that the future of the Middle East should be based on stability, freedom and human dignity.

The recent agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union on strategic arms limitations constitute a first step towards the liberation of humanity from the bane of nuclear terror. We hope that this process will continue to include chemical and bacteriological weapons and to render the Middle East an area free of weapons of mass destruction.

My country also supports efforts to resolve regional conflicts throughout the world through open and constructive dialogue. Those efforts have been successful in a number of areas. They also enjoy wide international support and enhance the growing role of the United Nations in restoring peace and normalcy in hitherto intractable conflicts.

(President Hraoui)

Lebanon affirms its readiness to participate in the 1990s in furthering cooperation among the nations of the world in all fields and endeavours.

In spite of 15 years of the daily threat of death, my country did not die. On the contrary, it has emerged with a new determination to exist and to prosper. Lebanon stands out as an example of the will to survive. With its message of forgiveness and conciliation, it reaffirms that it is a source of pride both for itself and for the world at large, that its very name, Lebanon, is not synonymous with violence and strife, but with construction, creativity and open and peaceful interaction with the world.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): As despair ebbs and hope re-emerges, as chaos comes to an end and order is re-established and as harmony is achieved in Lebanon, I wish, on behalf of the General Assembly, to thank the President of the Lebanese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. ROH TAE WOO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Roh Tae Woo.

Mr. Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Roh Tae Woo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ROH (spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation): Three years ago I had the pleasure of describing to the Assembly, from this very rostrum, some of the refreshing and heart-warming scenes of the Seoul Olympic games. Athletes from around the world gave us an inspiring vision of global harmony, transcending the divisions of race, religion and ideology.

Soon thereafter, revolutionary changes swept across the world. As we look around us today and take stock of those changes, we may truly recognize the progress made towards the Olympic ideal of "one peaceful world".

Today I am proud to stand here once more, this time as President of a State Member of the United Nations. To me, this represents a significant expression of the new tide of history. It was 43 years ago that the Republic of Korea first applied formally to become a Member of the United Nations. Those who consider the decades of patience we have had to exercise will perhaps understand the enthusiasm displayed by the Korean people on this occasion.

(President Roh)

To those who supported and encouraged our admission to this body and to those who acted and spoke on our behalf during all the years when we had no seat in this Assembly I offer the heartfelt gratitude of the 43 million Korean people.

(President Roh)

Today the cold-war system, which had prevented our entry into the United Nations, has become a relic of the past.

From the workers of the Solidarity Movement in Gdansk, who raised the banner of reform in Poland, to the courageous Government in Budapest; from those freedom-inspired crowds who filled Prague's Vaclavske Plaza, to those former East Germans who tore down the Berlin Wall: they not only freed themselves, but opened the road towards genuine world peace. In removing the physical walls which denied them liberty, they also brought down the barriers which had divided mankind into hostile camps, inevitably resulting in confrontation and rivalry.

It was unquestionably the Soviet reforms that touched off these great changes. But the changes were also inspired by the achievements of those nations which attained prosperity on the strength of freedom and individual values. I share a deep sense of satisfaction over this outcome with those who have aspired to a truly harmonious world, and I pay a tribute to those whose courage made real what had been considered impossible in the past.

Sir, I offer my congratulations on your election as President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and express my confidence that this session under your leadership will produce fruitful and rewarding achievements.

I regard it no less significant that, along with the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has also become a Member of this Organization. As our North Korean brothers join us in the journey towards peace and unification, I extend hearty congratulations to them on their entry into the Organization.

(President Roh)

The Republic of Korea has long pursued parallel membership of both Koreas in the United Nations in the belief that it is the most realistic approach to the attainment of peace and unification on the Korean peninsula. Continuation of wasteful confrontation and of the refusal to recognize each other could only prolong the painful tragedy of national division. For this reason, the entry of both South Korea and North Korea into the United Nations marks an important turning-point in inter-Korean relations since the division of our land in 1945. As responsible members of the international community, the two Koreas are now both bound by the United Nations Charter to carry out the duties incumbent on all Members for the maintenance of world peace.

Now that the representatives of South Korea and North Korea have taken their seats together in this hall of peace, we are convinced that a new chapter of reconciliation and cooperation will open on the Korean Peninsula.

The Korean people may live under separate systems, but we have never forgotten that we are one nation. Imperfect as it may be, the separate membership of the two Koreas in the United Nations is an important interim step on the road to national unification.

It has taken more than 40 years for us to move the short distance from the seat of an observer to that of a Member. It took the two Germanys 17 years to combine their United Nations seats. I sincerely hope that it will not take as long for the two Korean seats to become one. In this hall of peace, the two Koreas will open a new avenue of dialogue and cooperation that will lead to our national unity.

The cold-war system that brought on the tragedy of territorial division in Korea has itself collapsed. Now we will seek to achieve national

(President Roh)

unification, peacefully, without the use of military force, independently, on the basis of self-determination, and democratically, in accordance with the free will of the Korean people. I earnestly hope that all the Members of the United Nations will encourage and support Korean efforts to join the progress of mankind towards a more peaceful world by achieving national unity.

The world is undergoing epoch-making changes. Systems that oppressed freedom and human dignity are being dismantled and the tragedies stemming from dogmatic ideologies are coming to an end everywhere. Around the world nations are seeking to chart their own destinies. What is truly momentous about this process is that history is being advanced not by the forces of bloody revolution but by the power of reason and free spirit. But the great change has only just begun. This epic change brings enormous opportunities and is a source of hope for all mankind. Even so, we must travel a long and tortuous road before we can successfully mould the current process into a new order of world peace.

The recent Soviet political crisis is a clear demonstration of this fact. The entire world spent those three stressful days in a state of shock and dismay. However, the courageous citizens of Moscow braved the crisis and placed flowers in the muzzles of tank guns. Indeed, their victory is the victory of all freedom- and peace-loving peoples of the world. Once again the world has been reminded that indeed peace is indivisible.

We have to recognize that any attempt at reform, however minor, is bound to require an element of sacrifice and pain. In the cases of the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries, we know they are currently engaged in thorough-going reforms of their political, econonic and social foundations. As they move away from the system of strict control that pervaded every aspect

(President Roh)

of their lives for decades, the difficulties and costs of creating new structures must be truly enormous.

We all know that throughout the cold-war period, the nations of the world spent an exorbitant amount of resources on national security and military preparedness. Now the success of current reforms promises to bring benefits the world over in the form of peace, and we will enjoy this peace dividend for a long time to come.

As the benefits of peace are shared, it is only fair that the burdens and sacrifices should also be shared. Consequently, I call upon all the well-to-do nations to extend active support and assistance to the countries which used to have centrally planned economic systems, in their transition to democracy and free market economies.

Owing to the imperatives of the cold war, the Korean people have had to sustain enormous sacrifices throughout the post-war period. Accordingly we, perhaps more than any nation on earth, yearn for a world of peace.

As a nation that rose only a generation ago from the ashes of war and as a recently democratized nation that is growing in prosperity, the Republic of Korea feels a special affinity with the emerging democracies and understands from experience the acute requirement that these nations are facing in common - namely, the achievement of democratic and economic development in tandem.

Korea is neither a wealthy nor an advanced country. But we are prepared to extend support to the reform efforts not only in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but in all parts of the world, and to offer them cooperation to the best of our ability.

(President Roh)

In my speech to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, I declared that a durable peace would arrive in our world the day we beat swords into ploughshares on the Korean peninsula. I said this because our own land was visited by untold trials and tribulations arising from the international imperatives of the twentieth century, and because the yoke was still upon us.

However, the climate surrounding the Korean peninsula has undergone significant changes over the past years. Even before the onset of world-wide reform movements, we took the initiative of going beyond the limits of the cold war. Subsequently, we established diplomatic relations with the central and eastern European countries as well as with the Soviet Union. We also opened mutual exchanges and cooperative relations with neighboring China.

For the previous half century, Korea's relations with these countries had been officially severed, and in practice were often confrontational. However, with our new friendships and cooperation we sense the onrush of the waves of contemporary history. Indeed, we have discovered the power of reconciliation. We are firmly convinced that the day of peace and unification is also coming to our land, in spite of territorial division and the ever-present military threat.

With the entry of the two Koreas to the United Nations, we have embarked on a new phase of coexistence. Now, it is our task to build on this foundation a positive relationship, which will soon bring peace, stability and national unity. To this end, I propose that the two Korean Governments agree on, and specifically carry out, the following three measures.

First, the two Koreas should replace the fragile armistice with a permanent peace structure. Even at this very moment, a total of 1.7 million heavily armed soldiers confront each other on the Korean Peninsula,

(President Roh)

concentrated along the 250-kilometre-long demilitarized zone. It might come as a surprise to some of you, but we have been living under this unstable condition of neither peace nor war for the last four decades. In the light of these precarious realities, I believe the two Koreas should conclude a peace agreement, thus renouncing the use of force against each other, and should proceed to normalize bilateral relations in all areas.

My second proposal is that, in order to reduce the threat of war on the Korean peninsula, the two sides should seek to bring about realistic arms reductions, beginning with measures designed to build mutual confidence. In order to remove military confrontation from the Korean peninsula, it is imperative that South and North Korea agree upon a number of military confidence-building measures, including the exchange of military information, the advance notification of field exercises and of troop movements, and the exchange of permanent observer teams to prevent surprise attacks.

Above all, the development of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula will present a threat not only to the peace of North-East Asia but also to the peace of the whole world. Atomic energy must never be used for destructive military purposes; it must be used only for the peaceful purposes of promoting the well-being of all mankind.

Since the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, it should immediately abandon the development of nuclear weapons and submit, unconditionally, all its nuclear-related materials and facilities to international inspection. Once the Democratic People's Republic of Korea abandons its development of nuclear weapons, and as confidence-building measures are implemented between South and North Korea, I am prepared to take up discussions with North Korea

(President Roh)

not only on the reduction of conventional forces but also on the nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula.

Finally, and on a more humanitarian plane, the two Koreas should bring an end to the period of disassociation, and open a new era of free exchange of products, information and people. On our peninsula today, there are over 10 million Koreans who live separated from their families and loved ones as a result of the territorial division in 1945. They are denied even the most basic humanitarian right of knowing whether or not their parents, brothers and sisters are still alive, let alone exchanging letters or telephone calls.

I do not believe we can talk meaningfully about improving inter-Korean relations or about mutual confidence-building without first resolving this urgent humanitarian problem. Just as it is a universal practice among all civilized nations, so must the two Koreas open doors towards each other and guarantee free travel, communication and trade.

We must promote substantive relations by resolving, through dialogue and negotiations, issues of mutual interest, including inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation as well as political and military issues.

Next month, for the first time since the two Koreas became Members of this Organization, the two Government delegations will meet for a fourth round of north-south high-level talks. I sincerely hope that the talks will produce an agreement on the basic principles governing inter-Korean relations.

Recently, some limited exchanges between the two Koreas have taken place in such areas as sports, culture and trade. Small as they are, we value this progress. For our part, we will do our best to promote a relationship of common prosperity in which the two Koreas offer each other assistance for mutual development. The Republic of Korea is prepared to actively pursue

(President Roh)

economic cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in all areas, including trade, tourism, joint exploration of underground resources, and establishment of joint-venture plants.

Please bear in mind that the Korean people have been living as a single national community for over 1300 years. Therefore, once exchanges and cooperation begin, conditions for a political integration of the two parts of Korea will ripen very quickly, given our historical homogeneity. I do not believe that the Korean peninsula should be left as the only land remaining divided by the cold war. At a time when all the divisive barriers are collapsing, the unification of the Korean peninsula must be a matter of time and of the natural course of history. A unified Korea will be a land of freedom and happiness for all inhabitants, and will become a nation devoted to the promotion of world peace and the well-being of all mankind.

The Korean people desire to see peace prevail not only on the Korean peninsula but in all regions of dispute as well. I am gratified to note that there are real signs of progress in peace-making efforts in many areas of the world, including the Middle East, Cambodia, Angola, Western Sahara and Central America. I am highly encouraged to see the United Nations playing leading roles in these areas, and I wish to pay my respects to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his devoted efforts.

Along with efforts to prevent regional disputes and to remove their root causes, we should strengthen the enforcement of collective security measures. The recent war in the Gulf region confirmed that the United Nations is the only independent global body capable of asserting and giving force to the rule of law in today's international community. Our faith that peace and justice will prevail throughout the world under a new international order was

(President Roh)

bolstered when countries put aside their differences and joined the United Nations action in a coalition.

Members of this body will of course recall that the Republic of Korea was able to survive and preserve its integrity thanks to the very first collective security action on the part of the United Nations. Now, as a Member, we will participate more actively in all United Nations endeavours towards the peaceful settlement of disputes as well as in the enforcement of international justice. Peace can be built only when a common conviction prevails that nations do not threaten each other and that we may in fact live in tranquillity. We shall never win faith in peace so long as we let our safety hinge on the might of formidable weapons that can reduce this world to ashes in an instant.

Confrontations that brought about the balance of terror have now disappeared. We welcome the signing in July of the START treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union. We hope that it will accelerate arms control negotiations around the world.

(President Roh)

The Republic of Korea fully supports a complete elimination of all chemical weapons and will readily join an international convention as soon as it emerges. In this connection, I believe that the countries of North-East Asia should now take a fresh look at and approaches towards the questions of tension reduction and arms control in this region.

It is said that peace is more than the absence of war. To ensure real and lasting peace, we must remove the underlying sources of conflict. Just as the world is passing beyond ideological divisiveness, we must remove all barriers of discrimination - race, colour, religion and national origin. I therefore welcome the positive efforts in South Africa to build a united, democratic and discrimination-free society.

The Independent Commission on International Development Issues concluded in its final report that where poverty reigns there can be no peace. Because the Korean people have had similar experiences, we feel compassion towards the poverty-stricken countries and have a deep understanding of the problems they are facing at present: poverty, hunger, underdevelopment and foreign debt. Since the Republic of Korea made the transition from underdeveloped to newly industrializing country within the span of one generation, we may have become a model for those developing countries, with the message that they, too, can succeed given time and national resolve.

Thirty years ago, my country was a poor agrarian society with a per capita gross national product of under $100. Today, Korea has become a country with the thirteenth largest trade volume and fifteenth largest gross national product in the world. Korea's rapid development is due largely to the advantages of free market economics and the openness of democratic societies.

(President Roh)

The vast global market served as the seedbed of development for an industrious people and innovative businesses. The Korean people have continued their efforts towards further progress. Many countries around the world, as well as the United Nations itself, provided assistance in the process of Korea's development and became our partners for common prosperity.

Today, the Republic of Korea lies at the midway stage between the advanced and the developing countries. As such, we hope to repay the benefits we received from around the world by playing an active role in solving the global North-South problem. In addition to sharing our experience and expertise with the developing countries, we will seek to play the role of a bridge between the advanced and the developing world by promoting global exchanges and cooperation and by facilitating the flow of commodities, capital and information.

The advanced countries should actively extend assistance to the developing countries with a view to mitigating the latter's difficulties. These measures by themselves cannot fundamentally solve the North-South problem, and we therefore encourage the advanced countries to move forward with the horizontal specialization of industries among nations by accelerating the readjustment of their domestic industrial structures. In addition, they should also refrain from monopolizing information and technology.

In order to assist the economic growth of the developing countries, global markets should be opened wider and the expansion of trade should be encouraged. Tendencies towards protectionism and mutually exclusive regional economic blocs should be discouraged. The international community should adopt a more positive posture towards the solution of these critical problems within the framework of the United Nations system. Also, we should jointly

(President Roh)

meet such new and serious global challenges as drug trafficking, terrorism and environmental damage.

A new century is almost upon us. The twentieth century has seen a great number of achievements, certainly far more than in previous millennia. At the same time, however, this century has also been a period of unspeakable trials and tribulations brought on by wars, confrontations, inequities, and irrationality. With the twenty-first century near at hand, the human race is embarking on a new era of peace and reason. The irresistible waves of history today are those propelled by freedom, democracy and respect for human dignity and individual values.

A new era is upon us in which mutual respect prevails among nations and conflicts are resolved by peaceful means. Revolutionary advances in science and technology, particularly in the fields of transportation, information and communication, have transformed the world into a global village in which human beings can pursue common prosperity as neighbours.

Since the dawn of history, the human race has aspired to create a peaceful community on this turbulent planet. That aspiration is no longer a dream but a realistic goal. As partners for peace and common prosperity, all nations on Earth should now open their societies and broaden the avenues of exchange and cooperation to build this peaceful community. As the pivotal Organization for world peace, the United Nations, I believe, is fully capable of fulfilling this historic task by faithfully carrying out the letter and spirit of the Charter.

As a full-fledged Member of this world body, the Republic of Korea now proudly joins the world of nations in our common task of realizing the long-held dreams of all mankind. We may ask for help and understanding with our own problems, but we also care deeply for the welfare of other peoples.

(President Roh)

We renew our commitment to the United Nations and we shall march forward hand in hand with all nations in the cause of this Organization. Henceforth, the Republic of Korea will play a leading role in building a world that will be a blessing to our posterity - a world that will be freer, safer and happier; above all, a world of peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Korea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed tomorrow, 25 September, at 6 p.m.

Mr. VAN DEN BROEK (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Community and its Member States. First allow me to extend to you, Sir, my cordial congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. With your wisdom and experience, I am sure this Assembly will be in good hands.

We salute the admission to the United Nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, former Members of the League of Nations. I should also like to extend a warm welcome to South Korea and North Korea. May their admission signal a further improvement in their mutual relations for the benefit of the Korean people. Having listened to the impressive statement by the President of the Republic of Korea, we really feel that augurs well for the future of inter-Korean relations. We also cordially welcome the Marshall Islands and Micronesia to the United Nations family.

We live in spectacular times in which the United Nations has a crucial role to play. The European Community and its Member States have taken joint positions and actions on many of the problems facing us today. These positions can be found fully detailed in a memorandum which forms an integral part of my statement and is now being circulated in this room. This allows me to concentrate on a smaller number of issues.

The failure of the coup d'état last month in the Soviet Union confirms that a new era in international political life has begun. The democratic revolution which had swept through central and eastern Europe in the last two years has now also taken hold in the heartland of communism. The ground had been prepared by the perestroika and glasnost policies of President Gorbachev. But when reactionary forces tried to restore a dying and unjust order they met with brave and insurmountable resistance by numerous Soviet

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

citizens and their principled elected leaders. In the end, democracy won, both in form and in spirit. This victory now has to be consolidated and made safe by truly democratizing State structures and greater devolution of power in Soviet society.

In the wake of these developments international relations increasingly become characterized by common values and common responsibilities. Representative government breeds responsible domestic government and responsible international behaviour. Democratic government implies government that is accountable, not just to a country's own citizens, but also to its fellow nations. Here we touch upon the heart of the United Nations Charter.

Iraq is a case which proves my point, albeit by contrast. Its acts of aggression abroad reflect the lack of legitimacy of its government at home. The way in which the Iraqi regime has been carelessly sacrificing the lives of its citizens in external military adventures finds a mirror image in its brutal clampdown on the thirst for freedom among its own people. Repressive government breeds irresponsible government. The United Nations rightly maintains its strong pressure on the Government of Iraq to revise its reckless policies. At the same time the international community has demonstrated, with Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991), its willingness to take the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people into account. Non-compliance would only directly hurt the Iraqi people, and the Iraqi Government would be held fully responsible for this.

Democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms being on the rise, not only in Eastern Europe but also elsewhere on the globe, the world is experiencing new possibilities for international cooperation, regional integration and a more just and lawful world order. In order to meet these

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

challenges, strengthening and reforming the United Nations are among the tasks which press themselves upon us. However, in these hopeful and promising times not all is well. Several regions and countries, including notably the newly emerging democracies, are grappling with serious instabilities and even conflicts. We sincerely hope that the emancipation of the republics and the awakening of national feelings in the Soviet Union will strengthen rather than weaken that country's peaceful process of democratic change.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, although some conflicts appear to be on the way towards satisfactory resolution, others are still festering or are even only just beginning to surface. Painful as they may be for those directly involved, and dangerous as they may be for regional security, these conflicts also tend to place a heavy burden upon the world as a whole. The number of people seeking refuge in other countries, for instance, is rapidly increasing. This problem can only become more serious if, in conjunction with these conflicts, economic conditions continue to deteriorate. Willingly or unwillingly, the world is increasingly affected. In an ever more interdependent, and yet at the same time fragmenting, world, we need to shoulder our common responsibilities.

Let me turn first to Europe. In this old continent we hope to have learned some lessons from our long history of bloody conflicts and nationalistic strife.

In the European Community we intend to take decisive steps this year towards further economic and political unification. Apart from direct economic benefits which the Community member States should be able to reap, the deeper motive is clearly political. We have taken to heart what Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Community, taught us: that

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

we should not fight over national borders, but, rather, make them irrelevant through ever-increasing economic and political cooperation so as to be able to remove them altogether in the end. This political inspiration is a strong guarantee that the European Community will not turn inward. Instead, both in the economic and the political field we are determined to remain open-minded, ready to play a responsible role, both in Europe and in the world as a whole. Our recent initiatives on Yugoslavia are a reflection of this attitude. Since 7 September a Conference on Yugoslavia, with, in its context, an Arbitration Commission, has been under way in The Hague under the aegis of the European Community. A cease-fire agreement is being monitored by European Community countries together with four other States participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

The European Community and its member States will persevere in their mediation efforts. Their aim in doing so is not to preserve artificially a unity that no longer exists nor to impose a destiny upon the peoples of Yugoslavia, which only they have the right to decide upon. Rather, the Twelve hope to help avoid an uncontrolled and violent fragmentation resulting from bitterness and hatred and from extreme nationalism and ethnocentrism, which in the past has brought so much shame, bloodshed and suffering to our continent and to the world as a whole.

Where in Yugoslavia new political structures are called for, let them be negotiated and decided upon through peaceful dialogue. Let these talks be conducted with full respect both for the right to self-determination but also for legitimate concerns for the full protection of minority rights, which is a prime duty of any responsible government. The Twelve will not recognize any change of borders established by force and call upon the world community to adopt a similar position. The Twelve will continue to insist on full compliance with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a new Europe.

Our endeavours to find appropriate answers to this crisis could be significantly reinforced by endorsement from the Security Council and the international community as a whole, the more so since we feel that a continuation of this crisis poses a threat to international peace and security.

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

The Community and its member States have instituted an arms embargo against Yugoslavia until self-defence and protection of minorities no longer serve as an excuse for expansionism and oppression. Given the continuous breaches of the cease-fire agreements, the Twelve are of the opinion that a mandatory arms embargo by the Security Council under Chapter VII is needed to bring the violence to an end in this region. More generally speaking, we feel that the authoritative voice of the Security Council, expressing full support for the regional endeavours being undertaken, would certainly contribute to their positive outcome.

We are convinced that the peaceful settlement of the Yugoslav question will have a positive bearing on potential conflicts of a similar nature elsewhere. We therefore call upon all leaders, parties and all people in Yugoslavia to stop the violence and to cooperate with us in order to make the Yugoslavia Conference, under European Community auspices and under the chairmanship of Lord Carrington, a success for the sake of all in Yugoslavia and for peace and stability on our continent.

In the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) the 38 European and North American member States have developed norms of State behaviour which, while based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, clearly go beyond them in scope and commitment. The Charter of Paris, concluded at the CSCE summit meeting of November 1990, spells out the new democratic consensus in Europe, taking human rights as the key to the organization of both political and socio-economic life. Recent events in the Soviet Union show that these are not just solemn words on a piece of paper but a living reality for a growing number of people. Also, the European Community

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

and its member States acted upon the Paris Charter when they condemned the Soviet putsch as illegitimate and came down on the side of the democratic opposition. Strengthening CSCE, in not only its normative aspects but also its mechanism for crisis management, is high on the agenda of the Twelve. In this way we hope to serve regional security and well-being, complementary to our obligations under the United Nations Charter.

Common responsibility in today's world requires more than improving upon old structures, institutions and habits. Necessary as that may be, it would be insufficient if we did not also try to develop new ways of thinking. Allow me to share a few thoughts with you in this respect.

We need more responsible behaviour between States. Its first rule is the ban on the threat or use of force, as contained in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter. This is certainly no superfluous rule. Breaches of it can leave no State indifferent, as was fortunately exemplified by the international community's response to the Gulf crisis. Yet, both national and international security require more than just refraining from aggression. Security is enhanced by the breaking down of barriers of distrust, by the promotion of trade, contacts and communication, by the free flow of people, values and ideas - in brief, by opening up our societies. Security is further enhanced by taking the concerns of others to heart.*

In the military field we have to show responsibility by engaging in processes of arms control, arms reduction and confidence-building. Regional arrangements must be supplemented by world-wide agreements, as is shown by the

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* Mr. Traxler (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

pressing need for a convention on banning chemical weapons, for which the year 1992 really is the deadline. Equally importantly, existing treaties such as the 1972 Convention on biological and toxic weapons must be more effectively implemented. The Review Conference convening at present should lay a solid foundation for this.

Events in the Gulf region have once again made it unmistakably clear that more responsibility is needed in arms transfers. The European Council has identified common criteria on which national policies on arms exports are based. In the perspective of political union, we hope for a further harmonization of our national policies. As action on a more global scale is needed, we shall - together with others, including Japan - submit a draft resolution in this Assembly seeking the international registration of arms transfers, with a view to promoting restraint by increasing transparency.

As for the important question of nuclear disarmament, we welcome the recent conclusion of the START agreement on long-range strategic nuclear arms between the United States and the Soviet Union. It sets the stage for even further reductions in the field of nuclear weapons. The universality of the norm of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the effectiveness of its regime have been reconfirmed by the announced accessions to it of such key countries as France and China. We also welcome South Africa as a new party. We note with satisfaction that the Soviet Union has given assurances that it will institute safeguards against nuclear proliferation while restructuring the relations between its central Government and the Union republics.

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

In order to solve an increasing number of global problems or even threats to mankind we have to assume greater responsibility, notably in the fields of development and environment.

Lack of economic development, leading to staggering poverty, is not just a curse for the hundreds of millions of people who suffer from it. It is a moral shame, it constitutes a burden on the whole world's development and it is a potential threat to global stability. The situation of many African countries is particularly worrying. The new United Nations agenda for Africa rightly focuses on debt relief, resource flows and better market access. At the same time, it makes it clear that African Governments should fulfil their side of the development contract by improving their own performance, liberalizing their economies, allowing for popular participation and political pluralism and giving due attention to all other aspects of good governance.

Developing countries, including the poorest, need trade as well as aid. This is not the least important reason why the Uruguay Round of negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) must not fail. We must open the world for expanding exchanges of goods and services and resist the protectionist temptation. This is without any doubt not always easy, but with reasonable compromises from all sides we shall be able to succeed. The European Community will certainly do its bit. Its discussion about the reform of its common agricultural policy gives a clear indication of this.

Economic growth which fails to take into account the ecological balance becomes self-defeating. Development must be sustainable. Environmental concerns should be fully integrated into the economic process. Next year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development presents a unique opportunity to make concrete progress in this field, both in tackling

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

environmental problems which impede development and in addressing global environmental issues such as climate change and biological diversity. Much work remains to be done in the Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development if a meaningful bargain is to be struck in Rio de Janeiro. With only one session remaining, there are many seemingly insurmountable obstacles, especially relating to additional funding and technology transfer. In order to maintain momentum and commitment, we need to give this process fresh impetus at the political level. In our joint statement to the Second Committee we will go more deeply into this matter.

Calamities in various parts of the world, both natural and man-made, continue to confront us with loss of lives, devastation and uprooting. While the international community makes some effort to help, it can certainly do better. In order to ensure proper coordination between United Nations institutions, donor and recipient countries and non-governmental organizations we need to strengthen the emergency response capacity of the United Nations. To this end the Community and its member States wish to cooperate with others in launching an initiative during this session of the Assembly calling among other things for the appointment of a high-level United Nations coordinator, the creation of an inter-agency coordination mechanism and the establishment of an emergency fund. In this context we look forward to the report of the Secretary-General on this matter.

Another area which requires greatly enhanced responsibility concerns relations within States, particularly respect for human rights. Despite progress, flagrant violations persist in many countries, thereby not just endangering precious human dignity in itself, but also undermining chances for

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

development and for internal and external peace. The days when countries could credibly claim that their human rights record was a strictly internal affair are definitely over. The history of the United Nations has confirmed the legitimacy of the contrary view.

The United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in Berlin in 1993, could greatly enhance international respect for human rights by notably concentrating on improving the implementation of existing norms and standards and on extending the scope of mechanisms for reviewing compliance. We believe, for instance, that the Special Rapporteur constitutes a supervisory mechanism which deserves application on a much wider scale. Meanwhile, the United Nations would also become a more credible human rights propagator itself if it allocated more of its existing financial resources to that goal. The Twelve stress the need for changing budgetary priorities in order to alleviate the financial and staffing difficulties in which the United Nations Centre for Human Rights finds itself.

Given the close relationship between human rights and democracy the Community and its member States are also very much in favour of the United Nations exploring ways to promote democratic processes around the world. This could range from the monitoring of free elections to assistance in building democratic institutions. Another field in which the United Nations could play an important role concerns the protection of minority rights. At a time when existing States are coming under pressure from demands for autonomy and self-determination from segments of their populations, which thereby challenge the principle of territorial integrity from within, creative and innovative thinking is clearly in demand. In order to prevent unilateralism and even the use of force from prevailing, the world needs to develop principles and

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

mechanisms for the promotion of negotiated and peaceful solutions to these issues which are satisfactory to all concerned. We think the United Nations should intensify this discussion.

Naturally, human rights are primarily the responsibility of national governments. But the world cannot sit idly by when one of the Member States of the United Nations terrorizes its own people. History shows that such acts, apart from being criminal, can endanger international peace and security if nothing is done about them. Recently we have witnessed intervention by our world Organization for the sake of protecting human rights. In the aftermath of the liberation of Kuwait a number of countries belonging to the international coalition provided a safe haven to Iraqi Kurds fleeing from repression and attempts at genocide by their own Government. This action, which implemented the relevant Security Council resolutions, has meanwhile been followed up by the stationing of a corps of United Nations civil guards, this time with the consent of the Government concerned. In a regional context we have also seen the peace-keeping operation by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the bloody civil war in Liberia.

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

These interventions may not have been perfect - they could not prevent all loss of innocent life - but they were certainly salutary considering the human suffering they were able to stop. It is to be hoped that in the future these developments will have a discouraging effect on Governments in comparable situations; and if we want the world to become a safer place, we will need more than a ban on aggression. International law and order should be founded equally on democracy and on respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Above all, this is clearly a major challenge for the United Nations.

A common responsibility from which none of us can hide concerns the functioning of the United Nations. In recent years the world political climate has clearly improved for the United Nations, particularly in relation to its core function: the maintenance of international peace and security. Increasingly, the United Nations has risen to the occasion and played a crucial role in helping to resolve burning issues. We should capitalize on this fortunate development and try to strengthen the political functions of the United Nations.

One of the opportunities resulting from the increased political efficacy of the Security Council and its ability to act in concert lies in the area of preventive diplomacy. We should not just wait until conflicts get out of hand and become actual threats to international peace and security. Why could the Security Council not formulate political statements aimed at defusing tensions in a particular situation at an early stage, rather as the Twelve have increasingly done in the context of our European political cooperation? Why should it not also dispatch fact-finding missions to troubled areas? In fact, the whole concept of peace-keeping - which has evolved rapidly in recent

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

years - could be given another boost by exploring the possibilities in this direction, too. In this way United Nations involvement could help prevent conflicts from actually breaking out or contain them at an early stage.

Similarly, the increased political relevance of the Security Council also points to new opportunities for the Secretary-General to make fuller use of his competence under Article 99 of the Charter. The Secretary-General could benefit from the changes in the international climate by initiating at an early stage discussions within the Security Council on matters which, in his opinion, threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. In this way the Security Council could further improve its decision-making ability.

Strengthening the political functions of the United Nations should, however, go hand in hand with a continued and resolute restructuring of the United Nations system in all its aspects. This is rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his latest report on the Organization. The Economic and Social Council should be revitalized: the resumed forty-fifth session produced encouraging signs of progress in this direction. Also, the General Assembly needs to seriously rethink its own procedures and methods, in order to make itself more able to provide guidance to the international community.

Last but certainly not least, reform of the Secretariat seems essential if the United Nations is to acquire the capacity and flexibility to cope with present and future tasks. The incoming Secretary-General should be in a position to act upon broad outlines for increased operational efficiency that are widely supported in this Assembly.

For the United Nations to be effective, restructuring will, however, not be enough. A sound financial base is of the utmost importance. Unfortunately,

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

not all Member States fulfil their financial obligations. We therefore urge all Members to live up to their responsibility and pay their assessed contributions on time.

In a number of regional conflicts we can discern certain rays of hope. Bringing about peace in the Middle East is now an urgent task. In particular this is true of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question. The Twelve have from the outset supported the initiative of the United States to set in motion a process of parallel negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours and between Israel and the Palestinians. We welcome the untiring efforts of Secretary of State Baker and we urge all parties not to miss this historic opportunity to have a peace conference convened for next month. The European Community and its Member States will actively contribute to the success of this conference.

As to their substance, these negotiations will have to be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and their implied principle of "land for peace". Israel must be able to enjoy its right to live within secure and recognized borders. Equally, the Palestinians' right to self-determination must be given proper expression. The international community should do its utmost to encourage all parties concerned to negotiate in good faith and make compromises in order to bring a just, lasting and comprehensive peace to this tormented region. The negotiations would be greatly facilitated by regional security arrangements and confidence-building measures by the countries in the region. In this context, the Twelve would welcome the repeal of the resolution equating Zionism with racism, which was referred to yesterday by President Bush in his statement to the Assembly.

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

South Africa is an area of conflict which gives reason for some optimism. The reform process led by President De Klerk has undeniably moved the country into a qualitatively new phase. The legal foundations of apartheid have been removed, notably by the repeal of the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act and the Land Acts. That is, however, not enough to create a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa. It is indispensable that negotiations begin soon on a new constitutional order with the broadest possible participation from all segments of South African society. All parties, and not least the South African Government, have to help to create a climate conducive to the success of such negotiations. The international community, which is committed to the complete dismantling of apartheid, should monitor these developments in an appropriate manner. In order to encourage constructive change it should be willing to gradually revoke restrictive measures vis-à-vis South Africa to the degree that reforms have been put into effect.

As to Cambodia, the past year has brought substantial progress towards the achievement of a comprehensive political settlement. We welcome the delegation of the Cambodian Supreme National Council, under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. We rejoice in the newly established cooperation between the Cambodian parties and call upon them to conclude without delay the peace process at the next resumed session of the Cambodian Conference on the basis of the plan of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The Twelve stress the importance of free elections as the centerpiece of that plan, which was unanimously approved by the Security Council and the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. I also reaffirm

(Mr. Van Den Broek, Netherlands)

our willingness to contribute to the reconstruction and development of Cambodia upon the achievement of a political settlement.

Let me conclude by expressing our heartfelt appreciation to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to further the cause of international peace and justice. With the end of his period of tenure in this high office in sight, it must be gratifying for him to see some formerly intractable conflicts edging towards resolution. Many could be mentioned: Cyprus, El Salvador, the Western Sahara and others. On behalf of the Twelve of the European Community, I pay tribute to Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose high moral stature, diplomatic skills and political leadership have guided the Organization through 10 difficult years. We also owe it to him that the United Nations has come to play a crucial role on the world scene, as the founding fathers foresaw when the Organization was conceived 46 years ago. We wish him well and we salute him as an eminent partisan of peace.

Mr. PANKIN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): Mingling with the other people taking part in this General Assembly debate and looking into their faces makes one almost physically aware of the fact that, today, the representatives of the Soviet Union, which is transforming itself into a union of sovereign States, are viewed - and rightly so - as envoys of a new nation. It is a nation on the threshold of an entirely new era in its centuries-old political, philosophical, international, legal and day-to-day history.

We have just experienced a purifying storm - the defeat of a criminal coup, and everything that took place in connection with the recent Congress of People's Deputies. Today I extend the words of deep gratitude to all those who associated themselves with our resistance to the coup. Those days in August have convinced us finally of one thing - that the quest for freedom has become the main thrust in our own development and in the development of the entire world community. Only a society that gives full protection to individual freedoms and rights can be prosperous and dynamic.

The longing for freedom and democracy has always been present in the minds and hearts of our people. It has survived despite decades of despotism and lawlessness, and the years of perestroika brought it to life with renewed vigour and translated it into concrete deeds. The courage of unarmed people stemming the advance of political monsters who opposed the new thinking proved that the peoples of our country will no longer bow the knee to diktat. In essence, the defeat of a coup aimed at restoring totalitarian rule led to a revolution that changed the face of the nation, sweeping away the last remaining pillars of a bankrupt regime.

The failure of the coup was also a world-wide victory for the forces of good. Together, we managed to avert the threat of a return to the cold war,

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

to remove the obstacles to progress towards a new state of interaction and partnership, towards democracy and a new era of peace-making.

The political developments of the first half of this year created the major prerequisites for this change.

There have been breakthroughs in two central areas of disarmament - conventional arms in Europe, and strategic nuclear arms. Armaments are being reduced, although only recently it was held that an arms build-up was precisely what guarantees national security. As President Bush pointed out in his address to the General Assembly yesterday, this proves that relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, between East and West, are no longer relations between adversaries. Such drastic cuts are possible only between partners who have recognized that they have shared, rather than conflicting, security interests.

A decisive step towards the end of the cold war has been taken in an area that is most resistant to new trends - the economy. The London meeting between the Soviet President and the G-7 leaders and subsequent contacts between the Seven and the leaders of our Union and its republics set the stage for overcoming the economic division of the world and restoring its integrity, its economic interdependence and its market and financial fabric.

Iraq's aggression against Kuwait put the nascent global unity to a serious test. The world community's concerted efforts to resist the aggressor, including the efforts of the five permanent members of the Security Council, were truly unprecedented. The consensus that emerged in the United Nations around the central idea that breaches of the peace are inadmissible remained intact even after the crisis in the Gulf was over. Indeed, this consensus led to practical steps to resolve other burning issues, including

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

the formidable challenge of the search for a Middle East settlement, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Today, there remains hardly a single regional conflict where there is not a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

Europe - once the epicentre of two world wars and an arena of confrontation - is becoming a laboratory for new forms of interaction. In fact, the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe already transcends regional frontiers. A new transcontinental community is coming into being - a "belt" of trust, cooperation and security that spans the countries of three parts of the world: the entire northern hemisphere.

Political dialogue is getting under way in Asia and the Pacific, as nations and international associations in that region join in a search for mechanisms for the discussion and collective solution of common problems. Latin America as a community of mutually tolerant and democratic nations is becoming a political reality. On the African continent, negotiations are replacing hostilities and, at times, barbaric methods of force.

This global change is inextricably linked with perestroika in the Soviet Union. Before the events of August the progress of perestroika inside the country lagged far behind its international impact. Now that that gap has been closed, internal and external activities can proceed at a single and accelerating pace. The steadfastness of the President of the USSR, Mr. Gorbachev, the courage and initiative of Mr. Yeltsin, the Russian President, the vigorous popular movement and the overwhelming solidarity of the rest of the world enabled us not only to defeat the coup but also to dismantle the braking mechanisms that had hindered the country's progress towards the rule of law and a civic society.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

To a certain extent, the coup and all the risks involved are precisely what brought about a strong centrifugal trend in our country as, between 22 August and 9 September, eight republics declared themselves independent from the union. That is how they reacted to the threat posed by the putsch, the aim of which was the restoration of a totalitarian society.

The extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies at the beginning of September met the challenge of the time, establishing for a period of transition a structure whereby the republics - to use the words of the President of Russian - would obtain as much sovereignty as they could take. Now that the element of coersion is behind us and the sovereign republics are able to take stock of the situation, there has developed a centripetal trend, which is gaining momentum.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

This is evidenced by the intensive activity of the State Council, chaired by President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, and comprising the leaders of the Republics. The first decision of this body was the recognition of the independence of the three Baltic States. At the second session of the Council the basic forms of an economic union - which will be open for participation by any Republic, including the Baltic States, should they so desire - were addressed and endorsed.

The State Council is working on measures to overcome the rather critical problems - to say the least - of food and medical supplies in the coming winter and spring months. The Inter-Republican Economic Committee has been very active in this regard.

All-union government agencies constituted by the Congress continue to function in the four key areas: foreign policy, defence, law enforcement and security. Profound military reforms are taking place, these will lead to a radical cut in military expenditures, which for many years have placed such a heavy burden on the budget of our State.

The Extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies, the State Council and the President of the USSR have thus answered the questions that had been causing world-wide concern. It can now be seen that the answers were constructive and sent a positive signal to the world community. As a dynamic, although still fragile, balance emerges between the centre and the Republics, we can see that we are now on the right course - despite the deviations or set-backs that may occur - and we look with renewed expectations to the international community for all the support it can lend us in making a rapid transition and taking a respected place in the family of nations. By stating

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

this publicly I am fulfilling one of my important tasks at this session of the General Assembly.

The new Union, at this decisive stage of its formation, needs the support of the world community, but it is precisely the world community that has an interest in the success of our efforts, since the prospects for creating a stable, democratic and civilized world order on our planet, Earth - which may be the only one in the universe - depend on this.

The President of the USSR and the leaders of all sovereign States and Soviet Republics are aware of their responsibilities under the Soviet Union's existing international agreements and obligations. I should like to reaffirm that the union of sovereign States will be the direct successor of all such commitments, including those we have assumed as a nuclear Power. Our country's nuclear weapons remain under effective centralized control.

"New challenges" is a favourite subject of political scientists. Not so long ago this term came to denote such things as international terrorism, international drug and arms trafficking, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), degradation of the environment, and the problems of human psychological adaptation to new parameters of progress. The depth and danger of these new risks have forced the world community - and did so even back in the days of the cold war - to begin formulating adequate responses to these transnational challenges. And although the bulk of the work still lies ahead, negotiating mechanisms are already emerging and international legal instruments are being put into place.

However, let us admit, both to ourselves and to the whole of mankind, that virtually none of us was prepared to face the risks of the new, historic period. Cleansing storms have thundered over the expanses of eastern and

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

central Europe, bringing with them all the promise that freedom holds out, bringing back the sense of dignity, self-esteem and faith in man's lofty mission on Earth. And it is not freedom's fault if the flames of ethnic strife have suddenly engulfed the world like the outbreak of a long-forgotten disease. Age-old and seemingly subdued instincts have come alive - instincts which have no place in the new environment. And all this is accompanied by the threat of economic chaos, flaring social contradictions, refugees and disease.

Europe, which had seemed the least vulnerable of all the continents, has suddenly shown its susceptibility to the virus of nationalism. After the division of Europe had been overcome without confrontation or instability and Germany had been peacefully and democratically reunited, Yugoslavia faced a crisis and is now on the brink of civil war.

Why this unpreparedness for new risks? We were too busy eliminating the deformations of the cold-war era to formulate in good time a positive agenda that would meet national aspirations. Regrettably, the energy released as a result of East-West reconciliation has not only served constructive purposes but also fueled a resurgence of national egotism.

Nationalism is becoming the main breeding ground for terrorism. The mortar attack on Downing Street, the villanous assassination of Rajiv Ghandi, the bloodshed which is still going on in Nagorny Karabakh, and elsewhere, are convincing evidence of that.

There is a danger that the ideological division of the world may be replaced by attempts to divide and antagonize countries, peoples and nations on national, ethnic or religious grounds. The result may be the nineteenth

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

century revisited, albeit it with significant new features, such as global interdependence and weapons of mass destruction.

The problem is how to make the growing national self-awareness serve the cause of progress, freedom and the prosperity of people; to keep national identity slogans from becoming vehicles of separatist policies leading away from the mainstream of world integration to absurd autarchy in either economic or cultural life.

Whenever national egotism spills over State borders, as was the case with Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, the international community must remain true to its position of principle and take the necessary steps, including enforcement measures, in keeping with the United Nations Charter. Of course, military force - or using it in appropriate measure - should be the last resort. Using it even to maintain international law and order necessarily means a set-back for the new thinking, a reversal of the trend towards establishing a new type of international relations. Today, the international community and the United Nations have sufficient capabilities to curb an aggressor, whoever he may be, and to restore justice without the use of military force - or using it in appropriate measure and on a collective basis.

There is also a certain degree of understanding with regard to ethnic conflicts of a purely domestic nature. The golden rule in this respect is to do no harm.

Problems arise also in the gray zone between internal jurisdiction and international responsibility. Basically, it is a question of the further development of the sovereignty principle in international law, as applied to the new realities and risks and to the need for universal interaction between States.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

Consensus must be achieved on a set of basic rules, criteria and principles for international response by the world community to emergency situations, a kind of code of responsible conduct for States, in an era of an interrelated and integral world. Such a consensus should combine the principles of sovereignty, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States with the need for States to fulfil their obligations under the United Nations Charter and other international legal instruments, and for the United Nations to pursue its goals in all the spheres prescribed by its Charter.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

The principal objective here is to harmonize national, regional and global interests, to assert a single universal scale of democratic values providing for freedom of choice, a variety of forms of social development, economic and political pluralism and the supremacy of international law and human rights.

The problem of individual freedom in all its dimensions is becoming central in world politics today. Providing for all basic human rights has become an imperative both of national development and international relations.

The gravest challenges arise in the world economy. Imbalances and deformations are the inevitable companions of economic progress. On the one hand, the end of the cold war has put an end to bloc rivalry in dealing with the third world. Against the background of interdependence, development ceases to be a one-dimensional notion and assumes a universal character. This is the key to a balanced world economy and to providing a solid basis for resolving global issues. On the other hand, there are growing fears that the new East-West relationship will leave many developing nations on the periphery of the world economy. At the same time, the third world is becoming increasingly polarized. Economic success in a number of countries is accompanied by worsening crises, poverty and hunger in the poorest nations. To prevent accumulated contradictions from exploding is a priority task. Moving away from ideologically motivated assistance should not mean forgetting those who simply cannot survive without outside help.

The same applies to the factors which hamper progress towards environmental security. Chernobyl became a world-wide disaster. Yet, it is also a symbol of international solidarity in a struggle for survival and the

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

triumph of humanism in relations between States. The United Nations Chernobyl Pledging Conference, which was held here recently, demonstrated this once again.

One of the lessons to be learned from Chernobyl and other environmental catastrophes is that there can be no effective way of avoiding disaster without overcoming the inertia of old industrial practices. The objective is to readjust the whole structure of the world economy to make it environmentally safe. This can only be achieved through concerted efforts.

New international relations should be universal. Within generally recognized norms of civilized behaviour, all nations, regardless of their ideological or political preferences and dislikes, should maintain normal and proper relations. Lingering hostility, let alone the lack of elementary dialogue between a number of States, objectively generates tension within the very fabric of international relations.

The USSR is paying its last diplomatic debts inherited from the cold war. We have normalized our relations with the Republic of Korea and launched a comprehensive process of restoring normal relations with Israel.

The new world realities of today require institutionalized security and cooperation structures, the modernization of existing mechanisms and the creation of new ones where necessary. At the same time, we should not hesitate to abandon certain previously established structures which are inherently incapable of evolution. The Co-ordinating Committee for East-West Trade Policy (COCOM) is at the top of that list.

The activities of newly established as well as restructured international organizations should be integrated in order to add stability to the pillars of comprehensive security.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

The general outlines of this process were defined by the international community in a resolution adopted at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly on enhancing international peace, security and international cooperation in all its aspects in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. It was at that time - two years ago - that conceptual agreement was reached to begin drafting the fundamental principles of civilized international communication at the current stage of history - sometimes referred to as the new world order.

Members may recall that that resolution was the joint initiative of the USSR and the United States. When I met President Bush today, we reiterated the commitment of our two countries to broader cooperation in strengthening the United Nations as well as in all other areas. This commitment rests on a new foundation in the Soviet-United States relationship - no longer one of confrontation or even rivalry, but cooperation and friendship for the good of the world community as a whole.

The philosophy of new international solidarity, which is finding its way into practice, signifies a de-ideologization of the United Nations. In renewing our Organization we should once and for all leave behind us the legacy of the ice age - like the obnoxious resolution equating Zionism with racism.

A transition to partnership and collective action bears the promise of United Nations universality, both in terms of its membership and in terms of its areas of activity. The process has already been set in motion. At this session of the General Assembly new Members have joined the ranks of the Organization. These include States of differing size and population. Our

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

support for their admission to the United Nations mirrors the overall Soviet foreign policy of developing relations with all States, including small and medium-sized States.

It is with a special feeling that I wish to congratulate our colleagues, the plenipotentiary representatives of new sovereign and independent States - the Latvian Republic, the Lithuanian Republic and the Estonian Republic.

I see special symbolism in the fact that one of the first foreign policy steps of the country which began its new political calendar recently was to recognize the full independence of the Baltic Republics and provide immediate support for their joining the United Nations and associating themselves with the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process. That took place in Moscow at the beginning of the Conference on the Human Dimension. At the present time the process of establishing diplomatic relations and exchanging embassies between the USSR and the Baltic States has started. We are going to hold large-scale talks on vital issues affecting the destinies of millions of people.

Adapting the entire United Nations system to the new realities of international life is an item on our agenda. Progress has already been achieved in such adaptation and great credit for this goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is a confident leader of the Organization at this juncture which is perhaps most decisive. We hope that the line he so strongly supports will be duly continued.

There is a wealth of promising ideas on this subject. It would appear to make sense to agree upon launching practical exploration of approaches to reforming the United Nations. We are open to any fruitful ideas; we are also working on our own proposals. A concerted and essentially collective

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

regulation of international relations in the areas of security and disarmament crucial for the destiny of the world has become a priority in the activities of the United Nations and the world community.

Supremacy of law is the main point of reference on the way to shaping a new model of international security. A system of political and legal deterrence should be its cornerstone - a system based not on mutual deterrence but rather on confidence that mutual threat does not exist and also on a high level of trust and openness in the military and other spheres. To achieve this, it is important to establish, with active United Nations involvement, an atmosphere of general aversion to aggression throughout the world community. Any act of aggression must, from the very start, be regarded as doomed, not only militarily but also politically, economicaly and morally. An international boycott is the first step to deter and warn the aggressor.

Next in line is a joint elaboration and implementation of the concept of the next stage of disarmament to absorb the experience gained and make the disarmament processes stable, comprehensive and universal.

Priority tasks include making military potentials exclusively defence-oriented and working out the guidelines States could follow while restructuring their armed forces in conformity with the doctrine of reasonable sufficiency. That now is taking place in the Soviet Union.

The General Assembly could recommend initiating, as an intermediate stage, consultations to work on specific quantitative and qualitative parameters for minimum nuclear deterrence in all its aspects. It is becoming an urgent task to conduct negotiations on the total elimination of tactical nuclear weapons in as short a time as possible.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

A reduction in the number of nuclear tests, with a view to phasing them out altogether as soon as possible, is one means of halting the nuclear arms race. A broad movement in support of this idea has materialized in the political and scientific communities and among the public in various countries of the world.

The time has come to establish a United Nations register of conventional arms sales and supplies and to identify jointly its technical parameters with a view to arriving at agreed principles of restraint in arms sales.

The development of a long-term concept of the use of United Nations forces in accordance with the Charter of the Organization, including the refinement of rapid response mechanisms for countering threats to international peace, legally codified procedures for deterring a potential aggressor and optimal strategies for defusing conflicts, would facilitate more comprehensive utilization of United Nations capacities. Major tasks in this area include efforts to make United Nations peace-keeping operations more effective and institutionalized, broader use of the preventive capacities of the United Nations and efforts to find ways to correlate global and regional security structures. There is proof that conflicts can indeed be settled through national reconciliation, a balance of interests and responsibility among all the parties involved and the expression of the will of the people in democratic free elections. I am particularly pleased to note the important role that is to be played by the United Nations in implementing the settlement in Cambodia as a truly unique instrument for maintaining international peace.

Today a unique chance is at hand to set in motion the process of a Middle East settlement. It is essential to lock in the significant progress that has

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

been made in solving the Afghan problem. This session must take action to support efforts in these areas.

The ultimate beneficiary of the movement towards stable peace with maximum guarantees is the human being. The domestic policies of States and the practice of international communication should rest on uniform rules applied across the entire range of human rights as an inseparable set of equal categories of a political, civil, social, economic and cultural nature defining the status of the individual and his relations with the State and society. Substantive discussion of specific human rights issues and matters of compliance with international commitments in this area can no longer be dismissed under the artificial pretext of interference in internal affairs. By signing appropriate international instruments, every State, as it were, delegates a fraction of its sovereignty to the international community. The criterion is the primacy of human rights over the rights of nations and other bodies.

At the Moscow meeting of the CSCE conference on the human dimension, we focused on the problem of strengthening not only the national, but also the international basis of guarantees for democracy, political pluralism, the supremacy of law and human rights.

We might provide for far-reaching collective procedures that would ultimately include binding and mandatory elements. Non-governmental and human rights organizations should be actively encouraged to participate in their verification. In other words, after the Moscow conference, the concept of confidence-building measures, which has been put to work so successfully in the political and military fields since the conferences held in Madrid and Stockholm should, we firmly believe, become the cornerstone and driving force of the new turn to human rights within the all-European and the global context.

(Mr. Pankin, USSR)

Much has been done in the United Nations, but there are still greater tasks ahead, reflecting the risks and challenges that face the international community today. Our common and inseparable destinies largely, if not decisively, depend on whether the United Nations will be able to succeed in renovating itself and become a true multilateral guarantor of peace and security.

Today all of us, politicians and diplomats alike, constantly find ourselves with the word "space" on our tongues. We speak of a single economic, legal and ecological space. This has become an extremely up-to-date and fashionable expression. Yet, half a century ago, in the heyday of Stalin's tyranny, the great Russian poet, Boris Pasternak, used it to describe an artist's calling:

"We have to live without vainglory
Live in such a way that after all
A love that space bestows upon us
Would let us hear the future's call."

The call of the future! The author of Doctor Zhivago and the winner of the Nobel Prize heeded this call. Let us also heed it.*

Mr. DUMAS (France) (interpretation from French): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. Apart from being a tribute to you personally, to your diplomatic talent and your sense of reason, your election honours the representative of a country whose prominent role and place in the Arab world and on the international scene are known to all.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

May I also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuellar, whose indefatigable energy in the service of peace has given so many peoples grounds for hope, and which will have made its mark on our time.

The Organization is welcoming seven new Members. This is a momentous event, one which is cause for celebration. Welcome to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their return to our midst redresses an injustice that had no equal and effaces the criminal act committed against these peoples.

Welcome to the great Korean people, heir to an ancient and distinguished civilization, who come to the Organization through the separate admission of two States. We hope that they will thus find occasion for friendly dialogue, which will enable them to recover the unity to which they aspire.

Welcome to the Marshall Islands and to Micronesia. These two States will bring to the Organization the benefits of the ancient wisdom of the Pacific Islands.

The years 1989 and 1990 rang with the sounds of liberation - moments of historic happiness rarely encountered - and 1991 has seen the movement continue and amplify.

History has suddenly accelerated. A real revolution has radically altered our points of reference and swept away old habits. A new world is emerging. It will be based, members can be sure, on freedom, solidarity, security and the rule of law.

In the course of the past year, freedom has continued to gain ground. Let us rejoice, for freedom is the sun that shines on our peoples: freedom for Kuwait, which was reinstated to sovereignty and independence - admittedly at the price of the use of force - thanks to the new capacity of the United Nations to further the rule of law; burgeoning freedom in South Africa, where

(Mr. Dumas, France)

the barriers of apartheid have at last been dismantled - may this impetus not be slowed; and hope of freedom and peace in Cambodia. Speaking from this rostrum in 1988, the President of the French Republic proposed an international conference to help this martyred country regain unity and peace.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

It has taken three years for the realities of the situation to prevail, three years of patient negotiations, three years of persistence; for the inevitability of discord seemed to impinge on the slightest progress. The convening of a conference on Cambodia will at last set the seal on a peace agreement. I should like to pay a tribute to Prince Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council, who is sitting in our midst at the head of the Cambodian delegation. His patience and sense of dialogue have once again revealed his qualities as a Head of State capable of reuniting a people and reconciling it with itself. I should like to wish a happy future to the people of Cambodia, whose suffering I shared and whose aspirations I hope to share.

- Freedom of choice offered to the peoples of Western Sahara through a referendum organized by the United Nations in accordance with the wish of all the parties concerned.

- Hope in the Middle East. After so many years of conflict and absence of understanding, the prospect of the convening of a peace conference provides the opportunity for a settlement based on law and justice, a comprehensive peace settlement, it should be recalled, which should therefore enshrine the right of all to live in peace within secure and recognized borders, by giving the Palestinians a land and a state. Yes, freedom for the Palestinian people.

- Freedom for Lebanon, which is dressing its wounds and putting an end to its strife. Let it affirm its sovereignty over the whole of its national territory by the disarmament of militia forces, the withdrawal of foreign troops and the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Let it boldly address its task of reconstruction and quickly return to the path of democracy by holding free elections. Those are France's wishes for Lebanon, which is so close to it in heart, in mind and in history.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

- Freedom too for Moscow, where democratic forces have swept away factions which thought they could use violence to impose the return of an order that had been driven from the scene but remains present in our memories, an order that has been overturned and condemned. Let us pay a tribute to those who threw up the barricades of freedom and confronted the threat so that the will of the people could prevail. Hail to the defenders of the White House of Moscow.

In Kuwait, in the Soviet Union and in the Baltic countries, freedom is gaining ground everywhere and democracy is smiling on peoples. The points marked with a cross on the map of oppression and tutelage are gradually fading, and as they fade the old world order, with its compromises and deadlocks, is disappearing. This transformation is taking place before our very eyes. Let us look directly at it. Hope is replacing threat, dialogue is being set in train beyond all expectations, and the world rings with the sound of statues being toppled.

But new clouds are already appearing on the horizon. Will we see those who are gaining their freedom and independence take the path of blind nationalism and make anachronistic territorial claims? Will the clash of interests take the place of ideological confrontations? Roads and struggles of this kind lead nowhere, as experience and history have taught us. Dictatorship, poverty, exodus and war are their end result. To avoid these dangers, we must devise formulas and solutions appropriate for our times. Let us begin by building new solidarities, and use the opportunity to turn towards the future.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

With regard to building new solidarities, let us first speak of Europe. It is experiencing on its own soil the world's last great phase of decolonization. I wish to state here that France will be at one with all peoples which choose to make their voice heard on the international scene and which peacefully and democratically express their resolve to accede to independence. For self-determination is indivisible; and it cannot be an object of bargaining. Let us recall a few simple rules that may help these movements to mature in harmony:

First, every people that wants it has the right to self-determination and sovereignty. Secondly, this presupposes a clear definition of the rights of minorities; we should think about the role the United Nations could play in this respect. Thirdly, it is essential to ensure respect for international treaties, and hence recognition of borders. Fourthly, borders may be changed only through dialogue or, failing that, through arbitration. Lastly, good neighbourly relations can be governed by freely accepted agreements.

What France has proposed for Yugoslavia holds true in a general way for everyone.

Let us spare ourselves a return to empires and opportunistic alliances in the twenty-first century. Let us note our regional complementarities, derive advantage from them and give them a context.

Is this, after all, not the purpose of the Community construction in Europe so well described just a moment ago by my colleague Mr. Van Den Broek? Why have we spent 40 years building a European Community - first of six, then of nine, and now of 12? Because we were convinced that peace, prosperity and our identity would be established in a lasting manner only through the sharing

(Mr. Dumas, France)

of our national sovereignties. Those who had doubts must now bow to the evidence. The European Community has become a benchmark for some and for others a source of admiration. The European Community owes it to itself to continue to astonish the world by pursuing its integration, planned for the end of 1991. Strengthened by a Germany at last reunited, the European Economic Community will continue its progress towards unity.

The new democracies of central and eastern Europe have understood this necessity of union and cooperation and have turned eagerly and hopefully to the Community. Within the Twelve, France in turn understands this request, this expectation, which it hopes will be answered as soon as possible by preparations for these countries' admission to the European Economic Community. This will of course take time. That is all the more reason to get down to the task right away.

But are we to do nothing during this period, leaving these democracies, which are so close to us, uncertain as to their future? Of course not. Europe needs a new pact right now.

Aware of the danger that still threatens it, can our continent - our ancient continent - rally to preserve the gains of the past few years and go forward? This is the essence of the confederation France has proposed. Our aim is to go beyond the logic of aid, which out of necessity has been the reason for most actions so far, in order to arrive at a real political, economic and social community on the continent, in the spirit of the founding fathers of a free Europe in the immediate post-war period.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

It would be a paradox if just as this Europe - which will become more and more confederal - was taking shape, a parallel but contrary movement towards dismemberment and break-up were to prevail elsewhere. That is why we hope that the republics of the USSR succeed in exercising their new responsibilities and organizing their relations as they intend to do, and succeed in defining, at the international level, as reason and the course of events dictate, the expression of their common interests and resolve. We hope they can do so with due respect for the principles and norms of security and stability accepted in Europe.

Yugoslavia, which is being torn apart, represents the other example of a necessary transformation. May the legitimate aspirations for freedom which are being expressed there take into consideration the interests of all. May the rights of minorities be preserved and the advantages of a space shared by all the peoples of Yugoslavia be maintained and guaranteed. That, it seems to me, is the road to peace and regained prosperity. But none of this will be possible so long as the fighting persists. The conflagration is building and threatens to spread. Time is running out. Yugoslavia is heading deeper into an impasse. France believes it is incumbent on the United Nations to bring the parties to their senses by demanding compliance with the cease-fire, by showing them the way to dialogue and to negotiation that has been mapped out with their consent by the European Community, by saying to all that peace has its requirements, theirs and others'. France, which is the current President of the Security Council, will leave no stone unturned to achieve this end.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Can I fail to refer to the solidarity between the North and the South? No. The planet is one. Who can believe in a future in which less than one quarter of the world's population enjoys the benefits of progress while the remaining three quarters are abandoned to despair?

In the course of the past five years, Africa's gross national product has grown less quickly than its population. Today's 500 million Africans will be 1.5 billion in the year 2025, while the sources of financing are drying up. Net capital input fell in real terms from 1986 to 1990. World Bank and International Monetary Fund transfers are currently negative, with African countries paying back far more than they receive.

Without wishing to sound like an oracle, France has consistently spoken of this intolerable and inevitable trend in order to seek a greater effort of solidarity from the rich. My country senses it is being better heeded now, and I hope that is true. It welcomes this especially as another danger is threatening the developing countries: the danger of a society exploding in response to excessive demands.

It is appropriate, certainly, to ensure that the assistance to developing countries is well employed. That is the best way to generate official and private resources and to promote regional integration, which is still in its early stages.

In this respect, the Treaty for the Constitution of the Common Market of the South - the MERCOSUR Treaty - signed in March 1991, which groups Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay in a common market, is a good example of what has to be done. It should not remain an isolated instance. I am thinking in particular of Africa, where plans to set up a large common agricultural market should be pursued. The franc zone, with its single currency, offers a favorable terrain for such a market.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

France, alone or with its European Economic Community partners, intends to support these efforts. It does not intend to render them useless by imposing requirements that go beyond what is reasonable.

Lastly, one cannot speak of solidarity without mentioning the environment. The international community has already held debates on and carried out research into this important subject. It has launched significant concrete programs. France welcomes, for example, the success of the initiative on the decision to protect Antarctica, which it took in 1989 together with Australia, subsequently joined by Italy and Belgium. The Madrid protocol, which will be signed on 4 October 1991, declares Antarctica to be a "natural reserve devoted to peace and science". This responds to the wishes of all those who desire to safeguard our common heritage, our planet. It should inspire other actions.

I believe that everything I have said is of a conservative nature. Yet the exacerbation of risks and the emergence of new dangers require us to think on a new scale and give free rein to our ambition.

Thus, we warmly welcome the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to be held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and to which France is lending its assistance and support. That Conference will be preceded by the meeting in Paris at the end of the year, called by the President of the French Republic, which will be attended by all the non-governmental organizations concerned.

The efforts to combat desertification, to preserve and harness the resources of the great forests and to protect the ozone layer, biological diversity and the seas and the oceans: these are subjects of preeminent interest to all mankind.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

It would be pointless to speak of the future of mankind without referring to security. The end of the cold war provides an exceptional opportunity, so let us seize it by pursuing disarmament world wide. In that sphere my country's policy is consistent with a number of principles that I would like to enumerate briefly.

The most important agreement on conventional arms reduction in Europe was signed at the Paris summit in 1990. Its ratification can wait no longer. France is committed to this and hopes that all the signatories will proceed to ratification, thus making it possible to move on to a new phase in these negotiations.

France duly welcomed the signing in Moscow of the strategic arms reduction Treaty - the START Treaty. The reduction of the strategic arsenals of the United States and the USSR, which will take several years, should be followed by new commitments now. France will join in the negotiations once those arsenals have been reduced to a level warranting our participation, under the terms set forth in this very Hall by the President of the French Republic in 1985.

For Europeans, the existence and availability of nuclear armaments raise specific problems which have emerged with the changes in the Soviet Union. France has asked that the four Powers concerned meet as early as possible to examine these problems together.

On a more general note, France is in favour of global disarmament. In June 1991 it made public its plan encompassing all aspects of security. It announced its decision to adhere to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. My country will submit the instruments of accession before the year's end.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Already, we are taking steps to exercise complete control over exports related to nuclear energy.

France is in favour of finalizing at an early date the convention on the final elimination of chemical weapons. It hopes that the convention will be signed next year. The treaty banning chemical weapons should be accompanied by appropriate means for monitoring compliance, without which its effectiveness will be compromised.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

For while treaties prepare the way for security, it is confidence that creates it. There is no real confidence without control. The example of Iraq shows this only too well.

Strict compliance with accords and monitoring are the keystones of disarmament, and it is, in my view, for the United Nations to promote accession to these treaties, to monitor their implementation and impose penalties, where necessary, when agreements are violated. Let us, therefore, give the United Nations the means to carry out this task.

My concluding comments will concern strengthening the role of the United Nations. How can this be accomplished? Our Organization, which is the universal expression of our solidarity, has done more in these past years than reflect our concerns. It has done more than it had done in past decades. With the backing of its Secretary-General and the determined support of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations has been a driving force. It has affirmed the law on numerous occasions and enforced compliance where necessary.

The United Nations perseverance on behalf of human rights prompted South Africa to move towards abolishing apartheid. The efforts to help restore democracy in Haiti, the part played in the peace process in El Salvador, the Secretary-General's peace plan of 21 May for Afghanistan are all initiatives that have marked for history the growing role of the United Nations.

But it is undoubtedly in regard to the Gulf crisis that the progress has been the most spectacular. The main point was to stop aggression and to lay the often innovative foundations for order through law.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

The United Nations could not remain passive in the face of the tragedy which threatened the very existence of the Kurdish people. For the first time, through a Security Council resolution, the United Nations affirmed that the sufferings of a population justified immediate intervention. My country is proud to have proposed the adoption of resolution 688 (1991).

Yet, as members are aware, none of this could be taken for granted. Today the foundations of a new legal order, a new humanitarian order, have been laid. Why not adopt a code of conduct affirming the right to humanitarian assistance every time the integrity and survival of a people is threatened?

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that the progress that has been made is not sufficient to offset the reversals where these exist. If tomorrow, in the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, the United Nations were to give up its efforts to require compliance with the principles which have earned it its success, it would quickly lose in credibility what it has earned in prestige. The Organization is too much a grande dame now to tolerate disrespect.

At a time when France holds the presidency of the Security Council, it is pleased and proud to contribute to the adoption of two important resolutions, which I hope will be adopted, on Yugoslavia and Cambodia.

More than ever before, the values which underlie the principles of our Organization are a benchmark. New States have joined us and others will follow. National minorities are claiming the right to preserve what constitutes their identity and cohesion. What are they doing? They look to the United Nations. Individuals are thirsting for justice. What do they do?

(Mr. Dumas, France)

They invoke the United Nations moral jurisdiction. Never have democracy and human rights - the former thought by some to have been superseded and the latter considered by others the product of an impoverished mind - constituted such important guidelines for a world urgently seeking peace and prosperity.

Let us therefore prepare, clearly and with enthusiasm, for the great rendezvous of 1993: the World Conference on Human Rights, which will also be the rendezvous of democracy victorious.

It is there that, half a century after the cataclysm that shook the world, and the long night that deprived too many peoples of the light of freedom, our generation will finally be able to say: We have been worthy of mankind.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.